

### **Recent meetings**

The last meeting before Christmas was our social evening. We combined it with a dealer evening, inviting Jeff and Kay Williams from Newport Market to bring some of their stock.

In January, we reached the letter "R" in our alphabet evenings. As members have got more used to the format, the topics chosen have widened. This time we saw material from the Rhine to Rembrandt, Ross Dependency to Roumania, and rectangular stamps to royal babies. The five sheets evening that followed brought out an equally impressive range of material.

Our "work in progress" evening was something of an experiment resulting in some interesting part-written part-complete subjects being shown, including material from the United Fruit Company and errors on the Gibraltar ships definitives. Our chairman brought displays of Zimbabwe and Antarctic for his evening.

There were ten entries for the annual competition. The winning displays were:

<b>Class</b>	<b>Winning Entry</b>
Postal history	Airmails of Gibraltar
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General	1d Universal of New Zealand
Thematic	Japan Letter Writing Week
GB	QE 2 printers and processes
Best eight sheets	Middle East Forces Mail

The auction was a low-key affair, with no lists circulated in advance. It was, however, an entertaining evening for the twenty members and several bargains were to be had.

We had the annual visit from the Barry club on 2 April. Due to last minute problems, only Alan Rosser was able to come. His displays of Cunard Line and Queen Mary material provide the main entertainment. He was supported by Diane Cannard, who belongs both to Barry and Newport, and who showed her developing collection of ambulances.

Our second dealer evening allowed members to spend two hours looking at Roy Hollis' extensive stock of postal history material. I found it particularly helpful to have a more leisurely look at his stock than I can at fairs (when I can get to them) and Roy also had some fresh material ready for the evening.

For the visit from Cardiff at the end of April, we were treated to displays of Aden, Cardiff, Malawi stamps with a Christianity theme and blood transfusion. This final display being from Diane

Cannard again (Diane is also a member of the Cardiff club).

The final meeting of the season prior to the AGM saw three members from the Thornbury club making the trip to Wales. Dave Watkins displayed Australia, Cyril Saunders showed postmarks of the Isle of Wight (including their Newport) and John Harris ended with French West Africa.

### **Stamp fairs**

On Saturday 31 May, Barry Stamp club will be holding its annual fair, at the Memorial Hall starting at 10:00 a.m.

Chris Doble's Dragon Fairs are at the Jury's Hotel in Cardiff on Friday. The next fairs are on 6 June, 4 July, 8 August and 5 September.

The Cardiff Stamp Fairs at the City Hall run by AMP Fairs continue with events on 24 May, 12 July, 20 September, 15 November and 13 December. All start at 10:00 a.m.

Anne Scott continues her Bristol postcard fairs at the BAWA Centre on 1 June, 3 August, 4 October and 6 December.

The annual fair at Portishead takes place on Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 August.

### **Federation news**

The Autumn Day in 2003 will be hosted by the Barry club on 11 October 2003 at Barry Comprehensive School, Port Road, West Barry.

The annual convention for 2004 will be at the usual venue (Princess Royal Theatre, Port Talbot) on 1 May 2004.

The Social Philately event finally took place in Port Talbot on 8 May 2003. Pat Grimwood-Taylor of Cavendish Auctions made the trip from Derby to show how to collect and exhibit social philately. The idea of Social Philately started in Australia around 20 years ago, as a reaction to the increasing specialism of the traditional competitions. The idea is to tell a story connected with the postal service. In the first half, Pat showed three displays: the life of a Victorian gentleman, the life of a Victorian lady and the Home Guard. The second half comprised mainly material from Pat's prizewinning competitive history of South Australia, a topic she had chosen because of family connections. To demonstrate the difference between social and postal history, she also presented a short competitive entry showing the postal history of South Australia.

### **The end of the line**

Ceefax included an item on 9 May 2003 under the banner "End of Line for City Post Train Service". The last ever night mail train was due to leave Cardiff for Glasgow that day. The mail train service started more than 160 years ago and was (most famously) the target of the Great Train Robbery in 1963. The Royal Mail Group has decided to axe the service as part of a plan to reduce costs by £1.4 billion and return the business to profitability.

### **Sorted at last**

Older club members will remember when meetings were held at the Mill Street sorting office. The South Wales Argus (29 April 2003) included a picture of an IAC employee abseiling from the roof of the building to remove the old Post Office sign. IAC took over the site from Royal Mail in June 2000 but Newportonians still think that it is a sorting office and deluge the building with letters that they have then to re-post.

## **Fun fruit**

One of the strangest issues ever, and the world's first "design your own" stamp, was the March 2003 fun fruit and veg set. The South Wales Argus reported on 27 March 2003 that Somerton Primary School pupils aged eight and nine helped launch the stamps. Royal Mail staff showed the pupils how to "use" the stamps. The school was chosen because it has a healthy-eating tuck shop.

## **Youth scene**

On 29 April Alistair Mackinnon and Roy Hollis took our display stands to Chepstow to assist Eirene Grieve in her talks to the children at the Dell Primary School. Eirene talked for about 45 minutes to each of two classes and got a lively response from both lots of pupils. There was a "Guess the number of stamps in this bag" competition for which prizes of packets of stamps were awarded. There was also a competition for the best one sheet display on any subject, which was left for the teachers to collect and pass on to Eirene. She will judge them and send appropriate prizes assuming entries are forthcoming. The hope is that one of the teachers will start a school stamp club if they can get enough sustained interest. One of the teachers is already a collector so we have hopes. She may even be persuaded to join our club!

## **Obituary**

On 7 May 2003, Elsie Myer passed away at the Royal United Hospital in Bath. Elsie had been married to Ron, who died in 1988, having been club secretary from 1951 to 1987. Elsie's own collecting interests included Benham covers and she also supported Ron in building his collection.

## **Web links**

Here is the regular reminder of the Ebay auction sites: <http://pages.ebay.com>

<http://www.ebay.co.uk>

Clubs in South Wales with web sites are:

Cardiff Philatelic Society:

<http://homepage.ntlworld.com/roger.gilbert/cardiffphilatelicsociety>

Barry Philatelic Society:

<http://www.stampdomain.com/barry>

John Perry, Honorary Secretary

Email: [john@perry60.freerve.co.uk](mailto:john@perry60.freerve.co.uk) Web site: [www.perry60.freerve.co.uk](http://www.perry60.freerve.co.uk)